

# EASTLAKE

FROM C1

## FirstEnergy may install turbines

However, FirstEnergy did not provide an estimate of the number of workers.

By law, all of the company's power plants are connected to the high-voltage grid. PJM Interconnection, a nonprofit company based in Philadelphia, manages power flows over the grid in Ohio and 12 other states.

PJM is concerned that the closings could lead to instability of the grid in the region, especially during times of peak demand, such as on hot summer days when the widespread use of air condi-

tioning has kicked up demand for power.

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio is concerned that the closing of the coal plants will lead to electric rate increases by 2015, and it has turned to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for help.

PUCO Chairman Todd Snitchler was pleased to hear of FirstEnergy's plans for turbines.

"We're pleased to see FirstEnergy take this step toward developing additional generation resources in Ohio," he said in an email. "The planned retirement of more than 2,000 megawatts of generation in the ... [region] could lead to transmission constraints and increased capacity prices for Ohio consumers. The addition of these resources would have a mitigating effect on the im-

pact of the announced plant retirements to Ohio."

FirstEnergy said PJM's preliminary analysis indicated that the closings would affect reliability and that installing the turbines is one of several options the company is considering to address PJM's concerns. Another option is to upgrade the grid, enabling other companies to send power here.

George Farah, vice president of fossil engineering and construction at FirstEnergy, said the company is already negotiating to buy the turbines but would need permits from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and the Ohio Power Siting Board, along with an OK from PJM.

A PJM spokeswoman said Thursday, "In light of the retirements, PJM sees generation addi-

tions in this area as having a positive impact on reliability and will work with developers to move any submitted projects through the ... process to ensure their timely interconnection to the grid."

Another problem is that there are no large-volume natural gas transmission lines near the Eastlake power plant. Farah said the company is already negotiating with potential suppliers to build a pipeline.

FirstEnergy announced the closings in January, saying it did not want to spend the money to upgrade the coal-fired boilers to meet new mercury and other toxic metal emission standards set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

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# P.D. 3-9-12 FirstEnergy may install four turbines in Eastlake

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FirstEnergy Corp. said Thursday that it is considering purchasing and installing four large combustion turbines at its Eastlake power plant to replace the coal-fired boilers it intends to close at the site.

The turbines would burn either natural gas or fuel oil and generate up to 800 megawatts. But they would run only when demand for power was expected to outpace the supply of electricity flowing over the high-voltage grid in the region.

The Perry nuclear power plant, however, operates around the clock and generates more than 1,200 megawatts. One megawatt, or 1 million watts, is enough to supply 800 to 1,000 homes.

FirstEnergy did not release an estimated price tag for the Eastlake project, but a spokesman said the company would not pass on the cost to the public.

Eastlake is one of four smaller coal-fired power plants in Ohio that FirstEnergy intends to shut down in September rather than upgrade to meet pollution standards. The other plants are in Ashtabula, Cleveland adjacent to the East Shoreway, and Oregon, Ohio, near Toledo. About 400 workers would lose their jobs, retire or be reassigned.

The company said operating the combustion turbines would require far fewer people than operating the coal-fired boilers.

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